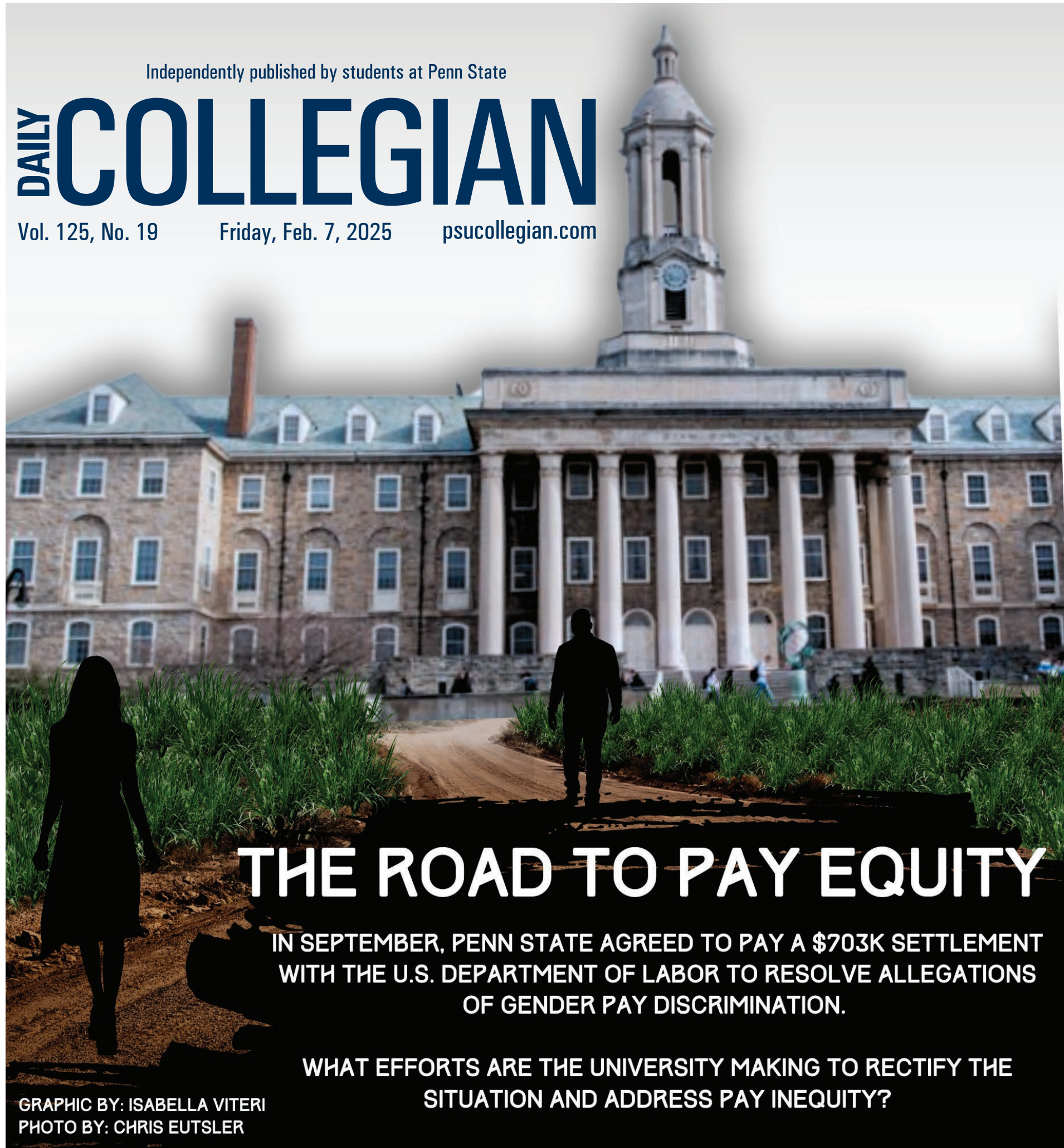




THE ROAD TO PAY EQUITY

IN SEPTEMBER, PENN STATE AGREED TO PAY A \$703K SETTLEMENT WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF GENDER PAY DISCRIMINATION.

WHAT EFFORTS ARE THE UNIVERSITY MAKING TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION AND ADDRESS PAY INEQUITY?

GRAPHIC BY: ISABELLA VITERI
PHOTO BY: CHRIS EUTSLER

By Elbia Vidal Castillo
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State reached a conciliation agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor in September to resolve allegations of gender pay discrimination. The agreement requires the university to pay \$703,742 in back wages and interest to 65 female employees who were allegedly paid less than their male counterparts for similar roles. The affected positions span a range of job categories, including facilities operations and maintenance, extension education, senior administration, research professor roles in the College of Engineering and the Applied Research Laboratory, and teaching professor roles in the College of Agricultural Sciences and the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications. The agreement emerged following an audit by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, which began in August 2021 and investigated Penn State's employment practices at the University Park campus. The investigation, which reviewed hiring data, affirmative action programs and interviews with university staff, identified pay disparities affecting a small proportion of female employees since at least July 1, 2020, and continuing thereafter.

According to a university statement made by Suzanne Adair, the Penn State associate vice president for equal opportunity and access, the university worked to "reach a resolution that fairly compensates the affected women" for "unintentional pay discrepancies." The \$703,742 settlement includes not only back pay and interest for the affected employees, but also additional commitments from the university to implement corrective actions. These actions involve conducting compensation analyses, revising employment practices and ensuring future compliance with federal requirements to eliminate gender-based pay disparities. These compensation analyses involve systematically reviewing salary data to compare the pay of employees in similar positions and identify any unexplained disparities related to gender. The legal foundation for Penn State's case lies in Executive Order 11246, which prohibits federal contractors from discriminating in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin. First issued in 1965, the order requires institutions that receive federal funding to adhere to strict nondiscrimination standards in their hiring, promotion and compensation practices. Institutions,

such as Penn State, that violate these standards may face legal consequences and financial penalties. In the agreement, Penn State expressed a commitment to rectifying the situation and has worked closely with the government throughout the investigation to reach a fair resolution. "We appreciate the government's efforts and are pleased that the audit identified the pay anomalies so that corrective action could be taken," Adair said in a statement. Additionally, as part of its long-term efforts to address compensation issues, Penn State undertook a \$60 million compensation modernization initiative in March 2024. This program seeks to align salaries with market standards while ensuring that pay practices are fair and free from discrimination. Penn State has also implemented various programs and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering an inclusive work environment. Diane Felmlee, a professor of sociology and demography whose research focuses on social networks and personal relationships, provided insight into the mechanisms that sustain gender stereotypes. "What happened is aggression targeting women, and it often mirrors broader societal efforts to maintain these stereotypes, making it challenging for women to assert their value in professional spaces," Felmlee said. Felmlee considers the importance of promoting these new programs into the university so that new researchers have protection that will back up their projects. "When these biases seep into hiring and compensation decisions, the result is often a perpetuation of inequality," Felmlee said. "While I am glad they are adding a new program to protect old and new researchers, we need to question why it happened and check the program's effectiveness." One of the key programs is the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, which plays a central role in ensuring that the university's employment practices comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws. "Addressing disparities re-

quires more than compliance," Felmlee said. "It requires a commitment to challenging the underlying stereotypes and biases that shape these inequities." The OEAO is responsible for investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation, as well as providing resources and support to employees and students. The office conducts regular training sessions for staff and faculty on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion, aiming to raise awareness about gender-based bias and equip the university community with the tools to address it. These efforts are complemented by the university's affirmative action programs, which are designed to ensure equal opportunities in employment and promote diversity of faculty and staff. Sarah Damaske, a professor of American institutions and sociology, labor and employment relations and women's studies, commented on the economic and psychological tolls of gender inequality. Damaske mentions the "guilt gap" women face, wherein societal pressures compel them to prioritize family needs over personal or professional advancement. "Women are often forced into positions where they sacrifice their health and financial stability for the sake of family, a pattern employers can inadvertently reinforce by undervaluing their contributions," Damaske said. "Gender pay equity isn't just about fair wages — it's about creating a culture where women's contributions are valued and their economic security is prioritized." The case also raises concerns about Penn State's relationships with federal agencies that provide significant funding to the university. In 2024, Penn State received over \$178 million in payments from federal contracts with entities such as NASA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Defense. Given the university's status as a federal contractor, compliance with Executive Order 11246 is essential to maintain eligibility for these contracts. Michelle Rodino-Colocino, an

associate professor of communications and women's studies, provided additional context on the situation. "These appeals highlight the persistent double standards women face," Rodino-Colocino said. "When gendered expectations intersect with professional roles, they can hinder women's advancement and reinforce discriminatory practices, such as unequal pay." Rodino-Colocino suggested that institutions must not only address pay inequities, but also "actively dismantle the cultural biases that contribute to them." As part of its broader effort to address gender inequality, Penn State has incorporated educational programs like Workplace Activity for Gender Equity Simulation to tackle unconscious bias and its effects on workplace equity. WAGES is an experiential learning activity designed to educate participants about the sources and cumulative effects of unconscious bias that contribute to inequity in the workplace. Through WAGES, participants gain an understanding that patterns, rather than isolated incidents, are the most visible indicators of inequity. This aligns with the goals set forth by the OFCCP for federal contractors to actively audit and improve their employment practices. The university's case is a local reflection of a statewide issue, as 2023 data shows that women in Pennsylvania earned only 82.4% of men's usual weekly earnings, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The case at Penn State exemplifies these disparities, especially when considering the diverse roles affected by the wage gap, from faculty to administrative staff. Moving forward, the university is expected to maintain compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws through ongoing compensation reviews, policy revisions and adherence to the corrective measures outlined in the settlement. These actions aim to create a more equitable work environment and set a standard for pay practices in higher education.

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Jacob DeLuca/Colegian

Old Main is covered in snow on Dec. 4, 2024. The university reached a conciliation agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor in September.

‘IT’S ALWAYS FRUSTRATING’

Musical theatre professors react to students leaving performances early

By Ashlyn Kafer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Musical Theatre program is a highly competitive and immersive experience that prepares its students for the demands of Broadway, national tours, television performances and more, according to its website.

The program prides itself on its tight-knit feel, with a faculty of 13 instructors to give personable, vigorous and hands-on instruction to its 49 students.

Olivia Allen has participated in musical theatre since she was 6 years old, falling in love with the Penn State program after participating in an intensive camp prior to her admission.

“I think my favorite part is that in a big university, it is a small program,” Allen, a second-year studying musical theatre, said. “The classes don’t really get bigger than 14 people, so it is very hard to get in, but you get very close with the people.”

Students from various cultures and backgrounds are part of this “family,” such as Ririka Kuroki.

Kuroki is an international student from Japan, where theatre was less of a part of her childhood, but she said it’s intertwined with her future.

“When I was auditioning, I didn’t really have a dream school,” Kuroki, a third-year studying musical theatre, said. “When I was accepted, we had accepted students day, and I loved the community. Everyone was so welcoming, so warm. We have really small classes, and the relationship we have with the professors I really love.”

The School of Theatre doesn’t restrict its lessons to students involved with the musical theatre program. Classes such as Theatre 100 invite students of all majors to discover the historical and artistic fundamentals of theatre.



Kate Hildebrandt/Collegian

Madeline Glave, left, and Ethan Peterson, right, perform in Penn State Centre Stage’s production of “Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street” in the Playhouse Theatre on Nov. 11, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

Assistant Teaching Professor Malcolm Womack hopes to broaden the general engagement and understanding of theatrical performance alongside its background in global societies.

“Historical, theoretical and professional is sort of the idea,” Womack, a Theatre 100 professor, said. “It’s a 100-level introductory class, so my goal of it isn’t to get too deeply theoretical, but to give you a sense of what theatre was and where it might be.”

The class requires students to see three School of Theatre performances throughout the semester to encourage active participation with the craft.

This requirement, however, has unexpectedly opened a door that undermines the hard work that the musical theatre students put into their shows.

Each semester, Penn State Centre Stage allots for two musicals produced by the musical theatre program and its crew. These musicals are popular for Theatre 100 students to attend,

and subsequently abandon after intermission.

With Theatre 100 classes including over 300 students, this phenomenon causes a once-full house to empty before the final curtain call.

Allen said the performers and audience members recognize the mass exodus of students from the show before the performance has concluded.

“It’s not the most ideal thing because obviously we all work really hard. It’s not something that goes unnoticed, everybody knows about it,” Allen said. “Some people may not realize that it’s intermission and think the show might be over, but there are a good amount of people that are probably just leaving because they don’t want to be there.”

The performers try not to let this deter their focus. Kuroki finds that she and her counterparts onstage work to make the most of whatever crowd is before them.

“It’s sad that not all of the audience are here to see the show, but

to pass a class,” Kuroki said. “But as a performer, we have to be in a mental space where I hope we can make them stay longer, but not think about them. Let’s live as a character and tell the story.”

Students with families who have to travel are imposed by students exiting the performances early. Those who wish to truly see the show or support a performer may be unable to secure a ticket due to the number of students who are attending.

Kuroki has experienced this problem with her own family, who has to travel across the world to see her perform.

“Because there are so many people taking Theater 100 courses, the tickets might be sold out even if they don’t show up,” Kuroki said. “There’s almost always an empty seat, even if the tickets are sold out. My family has to travel from Japan, but if it’s sold out, then we don’t know if they can get a ticket.”

There is also the consideration of the personal lives of the

students who are leaving. Womack said he’s noticed students who leave, but isn’t sure what’s going on in their personal lives.

“It’s always frustrating, but they’ve got jobs or work to do for other classes or their lives,” Womack said. “The expectation, of course, is that the students go to see the whole show.”

Womack additionally allows students to attend a different campus event for one of the assignments — including dance performances, concerts or comedians — in an attempt to mitigate the influx of students at School of Theatre shows.

The performers said that lessons on theatre etiquette, including what an intermission is, could also help solve this problem. Allen raised a few ideas of ways that audiences could be encouraged to stay.

“If professors could give a preemptive statement of how long the show is and communicate that, it would help because sometimes I think people don’t expect the show to be three hours,” Allen said. “It would make a difference in the performance that we give, because we feed off of audience energy.”

Kuroki said the School of Theatre performers understand that the requirements of classes like Theatre 100 exist, but she also emphasized the etiquette of attending a production and respecting the hard work everyone involved with the show put in.

“In Japan, in my hometown, a lot of people were not theatre fans, so I get that if it was just for a class and the show was three hours long, you might want to leave,” Kuroki said. “But, out of respect, I think it would be nice if they thought about the actors and how much they put into each show.”

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Ezra Nanes seeks reelection

By Sophie Ambrosina
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The 2025 State College mayoral race has begun, with Mayor Ezra Nanes running for reelection after serving his four-year term.

Nanes moved from New York City to State College in 2010 to get his MBA from Penn State. Post-graduation, he started working at AccuWeather, where he still works today.

Nanes resides in State College with his wife and two daughters. His wife, Mieke Haeck, said Nanes has always been someone who genuinely cares about the people around him.

“I always admire that he takes his time making decisions, but he’s really able to analyze the information that he’s getting from people,” Haeck said. “He’s really great at communication and analyzing what I’m saying and taking in my perspective and admitting when he’s made mistakes.”

Haeck said she sees this in Nanes’ service as mayor, as well.

“He’s really good at hearing everyone’s perspectives and taking in what people have to say and trying to come to consensus in a respectful way where everyone feels heard and valued,” Haeck said.

Nanes’ duties as mayor include serving as the presiding officer of the State College Borough Council and as a representative of the State College community, speaking on behalf of the borough in the press and relaying messages to elected officials in higher office.

“I’m just so grateful for the opportunity to serve in a public role like this,” Nanes said.

Lee Anne Jeffries, the executive director of the Downtown State College Improvement District, attested to Nanes’ abilities as mayor.

“It’s evident that he genuinely cares about the people he serves. His approachability and dedication to the community are a really great asset,” Jeffries said. “I think it’s refreshing to see someone so engaged in making a positive impact.”

During his current term as mayor, Nanes has created productive relationships with various leaders, like Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, U.S. senators, local elected officials, county commissioners and more. He also served on the Downtown State College Improvement District Board of Directors and advocated for expanding the free parking operation to include free bus tokens.

Jeffries has worked closely with Nanes in the past and said she would like to see him continue to support the unique downtown atmosphere in State College.

“We have a really unique downtown — it’s student driven,” Jeffries said. “But at the same time, we have local residents that really want to enjoy the downtown as well, so it’s finding that balance.”

Nanes said he has also helped secure crucial funding for the construction efforts under Calder Way. This project, which began in 2024, replaced sewage and water pipes beneath the road.

If re-elected, he plans to transform Calder Way into a pedestrian-friendly street where people can gather for events, music and food to foster a greater sense

of community. He also plans to expand pedestrian walkways around town to make it more accessible for students without cars.

During his term, Nanes also fostered a connection with Nizhyn, Ukraine. The State College community raises funds and provides Ukrainians with critical supplies like shelter, heat, clothing, school supplies and incubators as Nizhyn’s sister city.

“We saw how deeply important it was to this community to show our support both in word and in action for people who are suffering due to the unjust war that is attempting to take away their right of self-determination,” Nanes said.

In terms of reelection, Nanes said he takes nothing for granted in this next opportunity.

“I’ve asked the community for its support,” he said. “If people feel that I’ve been a great leader and representative for this borough, in my voice, my presence, my actions and the vision that I’ve shared is good and positive, I would greatly appreciate having people spread the word.”

While Nanes is running unopposed currently, he said that he would welcome the competition. He plans to wait and see how this election unfolds.

“I will take advantage of the opportunities before me to attend events and invite people to provide their feedback to me,” Nanes said. “My love of the community and what I’ve contributed to our success can help the people understand me as mayor.”

If reelected, Nanes plans to

continue honoring all of the people in State College and recognizing their identities.

“He’s a great fit for the role,” Haeck said. “It would be really good to have some consistency in the leadership. If (reelected), we can continue to build on what he has done over the last four years and continue to work on building inclusivity in our town where everyone feels welcome.”

Nanes also seeks to create an interconnected bike lane throughout the region and will continue to support the project on Calder Way. Additionally, he said he’ll continue to support the local business owners through the trying times of construction.

One of Nanes’ main campaign goals is to invest in more sustainable infrastructure. He has carbon emission reduction goals in the works and has signed to enter a solar power purchase agreement, with a possibility of making solar power available as an option for residential electricity consumption.

“We just need to continue working on reducing carbon emissions. That’s a transition that affects a lot of people transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources,” Nanes said. “It’s not an easy thing to do, it’s not a switch you flip overnight.”

Nanes also strives to increase housing availability if reelected. He believes there is a need for more affordable housing in State College for students and yearlong residents alike.

To achieve this, Nanes said he’d like to complete a zoning rewrite. This would mean reducing the size of the lot required to build a home. If this happens, there would be more space for smaller, more affordable homes. He would also like to change the zoning to allow more height to a lot and accommodate more residents.

Nanes said zone changes are critical for the future of the borough, mainly because it would generate revenue from an increased tax base, rather than having to raise taxes on existing homeowners.

“These are very sensitive topics because people love their homes, and nobody wants to see their neighborhood change in a way they don’t like,” Nanes said. “We appreciate how important (rezoning) is and what it means to people.”



Courtesy of Michelle Bixby/Penn State

Marie Hardin poses for a photo. Hardin has served as the dean of the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications since 2014.

Dean promotion

By Sophie Ambrosina
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Marie Hardin, dean of Penn State’s Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, has been selected to be the next president of Quinnipiac University effective July 1.

Hardin was recommended by a search committee and received unanimous approval from the Quinnipiac Board of Trustees, according to a press release.

“We sought an innovative leader who is energized by the opportunity to continue the university’s upward momentum and impact in higher education,” Board of Trustees Chairman Chuck Saia said in the release. “Quinnipiac found the perfect match in Dr. Hardin, whose background positions her as an astute and forward-looking leader for Quinnipiac’s future.”

Since becoming dean in 2014, Hardin has bolstered its reputation for high-quality undergraduate and graduate education, broadened its impact in interdisciplinary research and led its 2017 rebranding, among other accomplishments.

“My role has been supporter, champion, facilitator and ambassador for the work of a stand-out group of faculty and staff, who have helped scores of students succeed and pursue their dreams,” Hardin said. “When I leave this summer, the memories of that generosity, collegiality and dedication will propel me forward.”

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Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Mayor Ezra Nanes speaks to the crowd outside Medlar Field at Lubrano Park for the Driving Forward Blue Wall Bus Tour on Oct. 20, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

‘ART IS FOREVER’

Penn State alum Matthew Fedorek reflects on theatre experience

By Chayil Dozier
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

At the age of 7, Mathew Fedorek took a trip to Broadway for his birthday to see “The Lion King.” The show inspired a passion for musical theatre, and he has been attending theatre classes ever since.

After graduating from Penn State with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theatre in 2023, he never imagined he would be touring with the first national Broadway tour of the musical “Funny Girl.”

Fedorek is the assistant dance captain and a swing covering the characters Mr. Keeney and Mr. Ziegfeld.

“I couldn’t see myself doing anything else,” Fedorek said.

Throughout his 17-year journey in musical theater, Fedorek said his support system kept him motivated.

According to Fedorek, young artists need support because “it takes a lot of courage, responsibility and resources” to be an actor.

Fedorek said 40% of being an actor is onstage, while the other 60% is marketing yourself between “audition rooms, at networking events, parties, knowing how to dress yourself (and) knowing what songs to sing.”

Fedorek compared it to owning a small business.

“It’s budgeting, it’s marketing, it’s supply and demand, it’s inventory — all of these things come together to make a well-rounded professional actor,” Fedorek said.



Jackson Ranger/Collegian file photo

Matthew Fedorek performs during the Centre Stage production of “Cabaret” at the Playhouse Theatre on Oct. 12, 2022 in University Park, Pa.

Fedorek said the best part of his job is having the skill to change people’s minds.

“Theatre is a catalyst for change,” Fedorek said. “I think it teaches empathy, and it enlightens audience members to experiences that they would never have themselves.”

Fedorek was injured in July 2020, suffering a fractured sacrum and a herniated disc in his lumbar spine, which he believes was a result of consistently poor posture over time.

Physical therapist Dr. Aliza Rudavsky met weekly with Fedorek on Zoom and in-person from 2020-21.

According to Rudavsky, after Fedorek was cast as the lead role of Emcee in “Cabaret,” they made a plan for him to follow during the summer to prepare for the role.

That fall, Rudavsky said Fedorek didn’t have any significant remaining symptoms, and she barely saw him the rest of the year.

“Playing the Emcee (at Penn State) was a life-changing experience,” Fedorek said.

According to Rudavsky, Fedorek mostly managed his rehab and self-care independently.

“The healing process taught me a lot of patience, something

I lacked as a human being,” Fedorek said.

Thea Celey, an actress and dancer, met Fedorek at New Student Orientation at Penn State in 2019, becoming roommates for three years after.

According to Celey, he woke up at 5 a.m. to do physical therapy during the time they lived together.

“It was insane — it takes so much willpower to do that, and it paid off,” Celey said.

Rudavsky said that Fedorek’s success should not be attributed to luck, but to the hard work and grit he put into succeeding.

“I have done years of physical

therapy – manual therapy, sports massages, gyrotonics, a chiropractor, pilates and dance to heal my injuries, all while avoiding surgery,” Fedorek said.

Fedorek felt Penn State’s musical theatre program prepared him for his future in the industry.

“You owe it to yourself to reach to every corner of everything they have to offer,” Fedorek said. “Taking the training wheels off of a university program when you enter the real world can be terrifying, (but) I felt like I could ride the bike.”

Rudavsky hopes that people will learn from Fedorek to “keep showing up and putting in the work every single day.”

Fedorek has done a multitude of shows since graduating, including, “West Side Story,” “Fiddler on the Roof,” “Kinky Boots,” “Anything Goes,” “Sister Act” and more.

“I was put into rooms that I wouldn’t have been able to walk into without my training at Penn State,” Fedorek said.

Fedorek said he walked into the workforce with a sense of optimism, greenness, discipline and eagerness.

The career that you want and the world you want to have for yourself begins when you get your diploma,” Fedorek said.

He said he felt like he had the support and guidance from his agents, who acted as mentors.

“Art is forever, and art will always be there for you, but please don’t wait for it,” Fedorek said.

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Penn State announces new budget

By Annelise Hanson
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has announced its budget allocations for the 2026-27 fiscal year, marking the third year of its data-driven budget model.

The allocations, available on the Office of Budget and Finance website, are based on the university’s budget model and subvention funds.

The budget includes \$40 million in provost subvention funds, with \$30 million allocated to Commonwealth Campuses and \$10 million to University Park academic colleges. An additional \$11 million in annual support will go toward specialized instruction in the Nese College of Nursing and the College of Arts and Architecture.

The budget also includes \$50 million in presidential strategic funds for initiatives such as enrollment management and new programs.

University Park academic colleges will see an overall 3.6% aggregate increase in funding.

Notable changes include the Smeal College of Business, which will receive \$94.6 million, a 7.31% increase; the Bellisario College of Communications, receiving

\$25.5 million, a 14.97% increase; the College of the Liberal Arts, with \$170.1 million, a 3.15% increase; and Penn State Dickinson Law, which will see a decrease of 12.08%, receiving \$16.7 million.

Additionally, central administrative and student support units will receive a \$1.8 million increase, though most units’ funding will remain unchanged.

The Commonwealth Campuses were allocated \$314.9 million, reflecting a 7.3% decrease of \$25 million from the previous fiscal year. This includes \$30 million in provost-provided subvention to address enrollment shifts and long-term sustainability efforts.

Penn State’s budget model continues to evolve, with several updates for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Research funding will increase from \$28.5 million to \$32.7 million. Adjustments have been made to student credit hour and headcount weighting to better reflect recent enrollment trends. The World Campus undergraduate headcount has been added to the model for funding allocation, and tuition rates for Commonwealth Campuses have been refined based on program enrollments.



Chris Eustler/Collegian

The Old Main bell tower sits on Jan.16, 2025. University Park academic colleges will see an overall 3.6% aggregate funding increase in 2026-27.

The budget allocations have been shared with university leaders, and further planning will continue throughout the spring of 2025. The final 2026-27 budget, including tuition and fee schedules, will be presented to the Board

of Trustees in July 2025 for approval.

More information is available on Penn State’s budget website.

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‘City of THON’

By Gianna St. Thomas
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Mayor Ezra Nanes issued a proclamation renaming the Borough of State College as the “City of THON” for THON weekend.

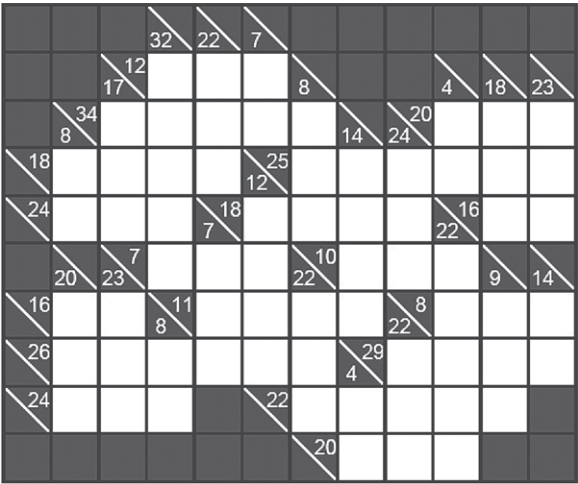
Beginning at 5 p.m. Feb 21 and ending at 4 p.m. on Feb 23, State College will be known as the “City of THON” in support of THON and its Four Diamonds benefactors.

Nanes said THON has raised more than \$236 million since 1977, impacting not only Four Diamond families, but also the community of State College as a whole.

“Thanks to THON, Four Diamonds and the Penn State Children’s Hospital, recruiting world class talent to continue innovative research, benefiting children worldwide, I Mayor Ezra Nanes, who hereby proclaim the borough of State College be renamed the city of THON,” Nanes said.

To email reporter: gms6268@psu.edu.

Kakuro



The rules are easy:

A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it.
A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it.
You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit can only be used once in any sequence.

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Sudoku

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Word Search

The Sporting Life

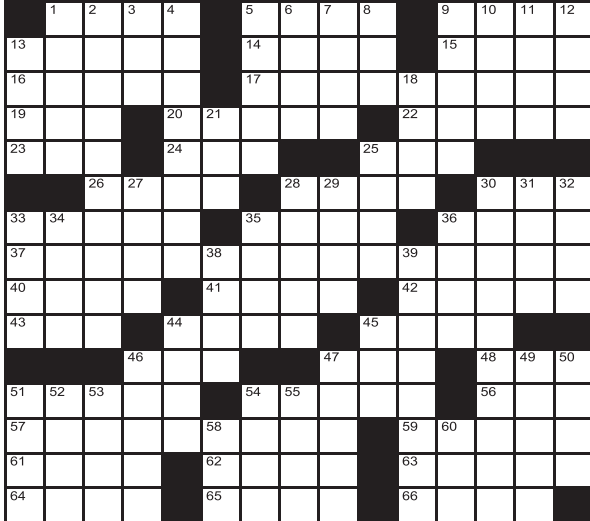
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A A G C O R N H O L E T E U Q O R C
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Archery
Badminton
Billiards
Bowling
Boxing
Cornhole
Cricket
Croquet
Curling
Discus
Fencing
Golf
Handball
Hanggliding
Hockey
Horseshoes
Hurling

Karate
Korfball
Lacrosse
Pickleball
Ping Pong
Rowing
Rugby
Sailing
Skeet
Soccer
Squash
Surfing
Tennis
Volleyball
Water Polo
Wrestling

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Crossword



Across

1 Elevate
5 Retain
9 Small wading bird
13 Egyptian peninsula
14 Spiced stew of meat and vegetables
15 Sicilian city
16 “... Butterfly”
17 Deferred admittance
19 Bit of binary code
20 Master, in Swahili
22 Carpenter’s machine
23 Square dance partner
24 Ornamental vase
25 Kind of story
26 Gross
28 Bit of sweat
30 Secretive org.
33 Ring around the collar?
35 Brood
36 Campus figure
37 Monument in New York Bay
40 Makes lace
41 Bistro
42 Something to shoot for
43 Reply to a captain
44 Commits a faux pas
45 Epithet of Athena
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Penn State must defend its DEI initiatives

Penn State must demonstrate its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by speaking out in support of its programs following President Trump's recent executive order "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity."

Trump's order asks federal agencies to develop plans to discourage DEI programs at institutions of higher education with endowments over \$1 billion — like Penn State.

There's a high potential this executive order may impact Penn State because it's a public university that relies on federal funding.

Penn State has affirmed a commitment to DEI in recent years. President Neeli Bendapudi identified fostering DEI as one of her five primary goals in February 2023.

Penn State's Human Resources also launched a DEI website

OUR VIEW

Penn State must affirm its commitment to DEI efforts following President Trump's executive order

with information on promoting inclusion through policy and inclusive hiring. Virtual training courses to "enhance" understanding of DEI are available through the Penn State Learning Resource Network. The university even offers a certificate program in Diversity Studies through the College of the Liberal Arts.

However, when its efforts are at risk, the university has remained silent.

Penn State hasn't been proactive in communicating how it plans to respond to federal pressure to eliminate DEI programs,

nor has it shown explicit support of DEI programs since Trump's executive order. Its silence leaves students confused and uncertain of its position on something it claims is a fundamental value.

Penn State shouldn't wait to engage in discussions about the position of DEI initiatives across campus. There's tremendous change in our nation, and if federal funding is suddenly pulled or DEI programs are threatened, the student body may feel betrayed or frustrated with the university's hesitancy to take a stance.

Penn State's silence may cause students to reconsider if they feel campus is a safe and inclusive place and question the university's values.

With many universities facing pressure from the federal government to dismantle DEI programs, other Big Ten schools have already begun making changes. Michigan State University canceled an annual Lunar New Year celebration following the executive order and its consequential concerns for DEI, according to its student newspaper, The State News.

Rutgers University canceled a

conference tailored to students from historically Black colleges searching for internships. The funding, coming from the Department of Labor, was held. According to the Associated Press, about 100 students and staff from historically Black colleges were scheduled to attend.

There's a sense of uncertainty surrounding DEI programs at universities across the country, and students are concerned similar cancellations might occur at Penn State. If Penn State truly values its DEI programs, it needs to stand behind its commitments.

Penn State students deserve to feel seen and represented. The university needs to speak up on this issue and be transparent about how it plans to respond to national pressure to roll back DEI initiatives. Penn State must lead in affirming its institutional support for DEI efforts.



Cartoons by Nate Campbell

MY VIEW | TERESA PHELAN

A 4.0 doesn't define your success as a student

BIOL 155: Introduction to the Biology of Aging ruined my 4.0.

A general education course about the aging process ruined my perfect GPA.

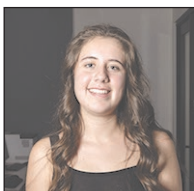
In high school, my grades and I were best friends. I was enrolled in multiple AP classes and spent hours every week at my kitchen table doing an egregious amount of homework.

I wish I could say I regret it, but I don't. All the hard work and dedication I've put in have gotten me to where I am now.

Flash-forward to my first year at Penn State. Besides feeling homesick, I felt like I had my academics figured out. I'd mastered my favorite study method in high school and understood what learning style worked best for me.

Enter BIOL 155. This class really knew how to test any amount of patience I had left. Between remembering terms I still don't understand and crying over osteoclasts, I was praying to the biology gods for a B.

I remember sitting in the Pol-



Phelan

lock Testing Center, holding my breath and crossing my fingers before hitting the "Submit Quiz" button. Every single time, it was never what I wanted, nor what I would've expected after hours of studying.

This was discouraging, and for someone like me, who never had struggled academically, was a much-needed wake-up call.

I couldn't just show up and breeze through every question; I had to employ the help of my TA and devote hours to my spiral-bound textbook.

Long story short, I finished with a B. You might be thinking, "A 'B' isn't even that bad," but high school me would've thrown a tantrum, yet college me treated herself to Chipotle.

This isn't to say that I wasn't disappointed, but I'd gotten to a point where I'd recognized that an A was unattainable, and I had to work for the next best thing.

My newfound mindset would then carry into my French class the following semester, where I realized I shouldn't step foot

in France anytime soon. Just like bio, I did everything I was capable of to secure the most achievable grade.

Coming from a small high school in rural Pennsylvania, the academic challenges that awaited me in Happy Valley were a night and day difference. This isn't an excuse, but there's a learning curve that forces students to reevaluate the way they approach school.

My 4.0 lasted a semester and a half, and even though I miss her every day, there's so much more to focus on than mourning something I can't get back.

I've become more concerned with balancing academics, social life and general healthy well-being.

There's no way to do well on an exam if you're ridden with stress and anxiety, and there's certainly no way to enjoy college without spending time with your friends. At the end of the day, the decision is up to you, but there's

no harm in a spontaneous trip to Berkey Creamery.

It's so easy to become obsessed with the idea of academic validation that it consumes your life, and I think I've been a victim for too long.

I'm not a changed person, but I'm a work in progress. I'll catch myself getting worked up over a five-point assignment or rereading an essay hoping to catch a mistake I didn't catch the first 20 times, and have to remind myself that it's OK if there's a missing comma — life will move on.

Being mindful of these changes I'm trying to implement means I'm already in a better position than I was two years ago.

I would say it's never that serious, but it kinda is. Allow yourself grace and kindness as you take on this chapter of life.

Teresa Phelan is a columnist, digital team and newsletter staff member. She is a second year studying digital/print journalism with a minor in sociology. Email her at tpp5354@psu.edu and follow her on X at [tphelan32](https://twitter.com/tphelan32).

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Sprinting into stardom

Penn State track and field freshman Ajani Dwyer turns heads

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On Dec. 7, 2024, freshman Ajani Dwyer took the starting line for the first time in his collegiate career. With the 60-meter dash just seconds ahead, the Sewell, New Jersey, native didn't realize that he was about to enter Penn State's record books.

Quickly out of the starting blocks, Dwyer crossed the 60m mark in a flash, clocking the second-fastest time in Nittany Lions history — a 6.60-second performance.

"I was ecstatic," sprinting coach Brandon Rizzo said. "After running the prelims (that fast), that was insane."

After breaking the Bucknell facility record in his first-ever college race, Dwyer was stoked. Little did he know another record-setting run awaited him.

Dwyer took the line again for the finals — just one of three freshmen to do so.

Putting up video game-like numbers, Dwyer once again broke the facility record, racing to the second-fastest time in Penn State history and the third-fastest U20 60m time in U.S. history.

Running a 6.55-second 60m — 0.29 seconds ahead of his competition — Dwyer didn't just shock the current Penn State program. He shocked alumni and Olympians as well, including the 60m record holder, who secured the record by 0.01 seconds.

"I think the kid's insanely talented," 2024 Olympian and NCAA 200-meter national champion Cheickna Traore said. "I kind of saw that when he went 6.55 the first meet. I was like, 'Yeah, that's actually insane.'"

Despite such success right out of the gate, Dwyer didn't have a lifetime of training like most track athletes. Instead, he started his junior year of high school when he was challenged in a race.

"I knew I was faster than any-



Courtesy of Matt Rudisill/Penn State Athletics

Penn State track and field freshman sprinter Ajani Dwyer prepares for the 60-meter dash at the Nittany Lion Challenge.

body else, but there were these people on the track team saying they were faster than me and that they were better than me," Dwyer said. "There was this one kid, and he challenged me to a race, and I'm not backing down from a race."

Lining up in front of the entire track team, Dwyer raced the fastest kid on the squad, putting him to shame.

"I did him bad," Dwyer said. From there, Dwyer joined the Washington Township High School track team, and similarly to his first collegiate race, ran the second-fastest time in the state at his first meet.

As Dwyer continued to race, he turned more and more heads, breaking the New Jersey 55-meter state record with a 6.18-second performance — the 10th fastest in high school history.

With each winning performance and record-breaking performance, Dwyer received more attention from colleges, including Penn State and Rizzo.

"I remember looking through

the runners of Jersey, and I saw somebody was fast," Rizzo said. "There was just something I started seeing, trusting my gut a lot more. I told Ajani, 'I think you're going to be the real deal.'"

According to Dwyer, the second he received a follow from Rizzo on Instagram, he was all-in on Penn State.

With family graduating from Happy Valley and several trips during his childhood, he knew it was a place where he wanted to spend the next four years. Dwyer had trusted the work of Penn State coaches and was thrilled by the possibility of training under Rizzo and coach John Gondak.

In his official visit to Penn State, Dwyer was joined by Rizzo and Traore. Knowing the talent Traore developed into under Rizzo, Dwyer was sold.

"It was pretty exciting, and that kind of amped (Ajani) up," Rizzo said. "He bought into the philosophy, and I would never tell you or make somebody buy something that I didn't truly believe in myself."

When Dwyer arrived on campus last fall, Gondak was excited about his potential, especially due to his commitment to acclimating to Penn State during his fall semester, and how that would transfer into his performance in the spring.

"Ajani came in, and (I was) so proud of how he did academically this fall. He really understood that he needed to stay on top of himself in the classroom, and he did great there," Gondak said. "We had expectations. Were they that he'd go run 6.55 in his first meet by himself? I don't know if they were that high, but he's obviously set the bar very high."

After running a 6.55 in December, Dwyer returned following winter break with another sub-6.60 performance, cementing his status as a force to be reckoned with.

"The biggest thing is that while he's run a 6.55 the first meeting, he's been consistently doing it," Traore said. "It basically shows that he gets consistent, and he's obviously one of the best runners

in the country right now."

A weekend later, Dwyer expanded his arsenal, showcasing his talent in the 200m.

In his 200m collegiate debut Dwyer ran the third-fastest 200m in the nation and the third-fastest in Penn State history. With a 20.65-second performance, Dwyer continued his winning streak for the Nittany Lions, dominating his third-consecutive race by a large margin.

"It was a crazy reaction," Dwyer said. "Did I think that was gonna happen to me? Yeah, yeah I did. But it was just crazy to see it come out into reality for the first time."

As Dwyer prepares for the Big Ten Championships at the end of February and the NCAA Championships at the beginning of March, he's helped build a sense of confidence and morale in the team, showcasing his success after just three meets.

"He comes to practice every day with a smile, I see him enjoying himself," Gondak said. "He's just one of those guys that's a great competitor that wants to beat the people that he lines up to race against. Every time I see him in the building, he looks up and says, 'Hey Coach, we're going to bring you a Big Ten team championship.'"

While Dwyer would love to experience championships over his four years at Penn State, they're not the true goals he has. He simply wants to work day by day, pushing himself to get better every practice.

"Penn State career? It's just a big word," Dwyer said. "I'm not going to put too much pressure or put times out there. I'm just focused on executing each day, practices and in every aspect, and I feel like after that, everything will fall into place."

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Set for softball

No. 25 Penn State softball set for five-game opening weekend vs. multiple ranked teams

By Gianna Dowling
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After a historic 2024 campaign that ended in an NCAA Tournament appearance, Penn State is ready to kick off the 2025 season.

The Nittany Lions will open at the NFCA Leadoff Classic in Clearwater, Florida, playing five games in three days that include facing three ranked opponents.

No. 7 Duke

Penn State kicks off the weekend against Duke at 5 p.m. Friday. The Blue Devils are No. 7 in the NFCA Division I Softball poll after booking the program's first-ever trip to the Women's College World Series a season ago.

Just as the Nittany Lions have ace Bridget Nemeth, Duke has a star pitcher of its own in junior Cassidy Curd. Both pitchers snagged First-Team honors in their respective conferences last season.

Nemeth appeared in 40 games, tallying a 23-8 record, 1.77 ERA and 202 strikeouts. Curd appeared in 32 games, totaling a 13-4 record, 1.31 ERA and 156 strikeouts.

Offensively, the players to watch in this matchup are Aminah Vega and Maddie Gordon.

Gordon was the heart of the blue and white's offense last season, finishing with 13 home runs, 16 doubles and 41 RBI en route to earning Second-Team All-Big Ten honors.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Penn State softball players line up during the Softball Community Day in Holuba Hall on Feb. 2, 2025. The Nittany Lions are set to start their season on Friday vs. No. 7 Duke and No. 13 Texas Tech.

Vega is the reigning ACC Defensive Player of the Year but also got things done in the box. She finished the season with 12 home runs, 52 RBI and 18 doubles.

No. 13 Texas Tech
Penn State's second game on Friday will be at 8 p.m. against

No. 13 Texas Tech. This will be the Red Raiders' third game of the weekend after facing Marshall and No. 24 Mississippi State.

Texas Tech missed out on the NCAA Tournament last year but has a different look this year after welcoming the nation's No. 2 recruiting class and No. 1 transfer class. The biggest addition was reigning Collegiate Player of the Year NiJaree Canady, who led Stanford to the national semifinals a year ago.

Canady's strong sophomore year finished with a 23-7 record, 0.73 ERA and 337 strikeouts.

This will be the second game of the night for both teams, so it's possible that neither Nemeth or Canady will start. However, this might be a game where both teams want to roll with their ace. If that's the case, it should be a true pitcher's duel.

Kennesaw State

After a strong Friday night slate, the blue and white will pick things back up at 3 p.m. Saturday against Kennesaw State. This will mark the Owls' third straight game against a Big Ten opponent, as they face Northwestern and Iowa on Friday.

Kennesaw State is coming off a 16-37 campaign in 2024 and

hasn't been .500 or better since 2021.

The top returner for the Owls is sophomore infielder Ava Guzowski. Guzowski led the team with 24 RBI last year, making her the first freshman since 2018 to lead the team in RBI.

Kennesaw State will see a familiar face against Penn State in Florida Gulf Coast transfer Meagan Ricks.

In the Eagles' only series against Kennesaw State last season, Ricks didn't record a hit and was walked once. On the defensive side, Ricks went errorless and recorded 15 putouts in three games.

No. 24 Mississippi State

The Nittany Lions' second Saturday game will be at 6 p.m. against No. 24 Mississippi State. The Bulldogs will face Texas Tech and Duke on Friday and Bethune-Cookman on Saturday afternoon before facing the blue and white.

Mississippi State is led by senior outfielder Sierra Sacco. Similar to Penn State's Gordon, Sacco paced the Bulldog's offense in 2024 and is expected to do so again this year.

This will be Sacco's second season in Starkville after spending her first two at Louisiana Tech.

Sacco was a Second-Team All-SEC selection last year and led the team with a .347 batting average and 13 multi-hit games.

In Softball America's Pre-season Top 100, Sacco was dubbed the No. 76 overall player and No. 21 outfielder. In comparison, Gordon ranks as the No. 92 player and No. 7 utility player for the Nittany Lions.

Notre Dame

The blue and white will wrap up its opening weekend at 10 a.m. Sunday against Notre Dame.

The Fighting Irish enter into this matchup after a tough Saturday slate against No. 6 Tennessee and No. 15 Missouri.

Notre Dame is coming off of a 27-23 season that ended in the ACC tournament semifinals. This will be its first season under coach Kris Ganeff, who has been a part of the program for the past 23 seasons.

Addison Amaral is coming off of a strong freshman campaign in which she earned Freshman All-ACC and Second Team All-ACC honors.

Amaral led the Irish with 53 RBI, 10 home runs and 15 doubles last season. She was the first freshman to lead the team in home runs since 2021 and the first to lead in RBI since 2007.

Amaral earned No. 71 on Softball America's Top 100 and was named the No. 8 second baseman by D1 Softball.

Coming off of a strong freshman campaign for Penn State is Saint Francis infield transfer Kaylie Walters. Walters earned First-Team All-NEC and All-NEC Rookie honors last season. She recorded 45 walks, 29 steals and a .473 on-base percentage.

Ahead of the 2025 season, Walters, along with Gordon and Nemeth, was named to the Big Ten players to watch list.

All of the Nittany Lions games can be streamed live on the GameChanger website and app.

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Maddy Perez/Collegian file photo

Penn State softball players warm up before a game against Michigan at Nittany Lion Softball Park on April 28, 2024.

Black History Month events

By Nandini Sanghvi
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With February underway, organizations around Penn State are gearing up to celebrate Black History Month with a variety of events and activities.

“Fire Through Dry Grass” film screening

On Feb. 12, Penn State Sustainability and WPSU will collaborate to host an online screening of “Fire Through Dry Grass” over Zoom. The screening is free, and those interested can pre-register here. The film revolves around disabled African American artists in a New York City nursing home during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be followed by a panel discussing lessons about the “social determinants of health.”

PRCC Black History Month Fun Friday

The Black Caucus and Black Graduate Student Association will host Black History Month Fun Friday on Feb. 14 in collaboration with the Paul Robeson Cultural Center. The event will be held from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Heritage Hall in the HUB-Robeson Center and will include food, activities and music by DJ Bennie.

Douglass Day 2025

Also on Feb. 14 is Douglass Day

2025. Honoring abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the event will be held at Dewey Collaboration Commons on the ground floor of West Pattee Library. Participants will transcribe information from the African American Perspectives Collection to the Library of Congress’ By the People Platform. The event is free, and those interested can register here.

“Brother You’re On My Mind”

A program called “Brother You’re On My Mind,” will be held at 5 p.m. on Feb. 20 at Heritage Hall. Featuring alumnus Johnnie Geathers as a keynote speaker, the program will involve conversations about mental health and promoting therapy.

“Black Chefs in the White House” featuring Adrian Miller

The “Black Chefs in the White House” course will be held on Feb. 26 at the PRCC library in the HUB. Also available via Zoom, the event will be held from 7-8 p.m. and will feature an educational history of life through the eyes of African Americans who served as cooks for U.S. presidents. Those interested can register for the event here.

Lakecia Benjamin at



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

Penn State’s Graduate and Professional Student Organization celebrates Black History Month with a Black Friday Fashion Show hosted by special guest Alana Morrison on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023.

Eisenhower Auditorium

At 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 26, Grammy nominated saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin is set to perform at the Eisenhower Auditorium, combining jazz, hip-hop and soul with Latin dance music for her production. Tickets cost \$34 for adults, \$15 for those 18 years or younger, and \$10 for University Park students. Those interested can buy tickets through Ticketmaster.

“Defining the New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance a Century Later”

Voices of the Harlem Renaissance a Century Later

Feb. 27 will bring the behind-the-scenes exhibition tour “Defining the New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance a Century Later.” The event will be held from 11-11:30 a.m. outside the Paterno Family Humanities Reading Room on the second floor of the Pattee Library. It will be followed by an open house featuring the Charles L. Blockson

Collection of African-Americana and the African Diaspora from 11:30 a.m. to noon.

QTPOC Fashion Show

At 6:30 on Feb. 27 in Alumni Hall, Queer, Transgender and People of Color at Penn State (QTPOC) and the PRCC will collaborate to celebrate Black History Month with a fashion show inspired by “queer ballroom culture” from the 1970s and 80s.

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Esteban Marenco/Collegian

The Lions Pride storefront on March 29, 2024 in State College, Pa. The store is donating 20% of its sales to THON over the next four weeks.

Lion’s Pride ‘4 The Kids’

By Xandra Adams-Dennis
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The neon pink yard sign in front of Lions Pride marks the store’s annual “4 Weeks 4 THON” promotion, where 20% of all sales over the next four weeks will go toward THON.

THON is the world’s largest student-run philanthropy that aims to provide emotional and financial support to Four Diamonds families who have been impacted by childhood cancer.

The promotion began Jan. 26 and will run through Feb. 22.

Katerina Varelis, a sales associate, said although this fundraiser is an annual event for Lions Pride, they’ve started selling THON-specific merchandise this year as well.

Varelis, a third-year studying marketing, is also part of Greek life on campus and said the store donates money to organizations on behalf of employees who are involved in THON organizations. Customers can choose where the donation from their purchase will go.

Varelis said Lion Pride coordinates with two THON organizers who check in with the store periodically.

Lisa Rhinehart, another sales associate, said most customers don’t know about the fundraiser until she explains it further.

“We get a lot of out-of-towners, like people coming for games and visiting family, so they’re always asking questions about what’s going on around here, and we help them,” Rhinehart said.

She said most people, in her experience, are enthusiastic about their purchases once they know about the donation.

Manager Michaela Penkala said there was a customer who left a comment on an online order stating this fundraiser is the reason she chooses Lions Pride when they’re looking for Penn State merch.

“They were a previous Four Diamonds family, so she just thanked us for participating,” Penkala said.

Rhinehart said she’s been a Lions Pride employee for about two

years, during which she’s learned that the owners are proud Penn Staters, and this is their way of helping whenever they can.

Penkala said the store being family-owned helps foster a tighter-knit relationship with its customer base. A lot of Lions Pride customers are multi-generation Penn Staters who have been shopping there since they were wearing Nittany Lion onesies.

Owen Ache, a sales associate, said it’s good to have the business giving back to the community he grew up in.

“We have a trophy case with all the years and amounts we donated,” Ache said.

The glass display case holding dozens of philanthropy awards stands in the archway in the middle of the store. On it, a plaque commemorates the establishment’s donations since 2009.

Ache said Lions Pride sets itself apart with the caliber of items it curates. He said the owner, a Penn State alumnus, knows how to adapt the store’s overall style as new students arrive.

“Even though college clothing is pretty much the same everywhere, I think we get some unique pieces in here,” Ache said.

Another sales associate, Alyssa Nigel, said she does a lot of fundraising for THON with her sorority outside of work.

“I enjoy the philanthropy aspect,” Nigel, a second-year studying accounting, said. “It’s great because I know sometimes they can’t be kids because of their illness.”

Customers can also shop in the online store to participate, and either ship merchandise to their address or pick it up in person. Lions Pride has donated \$343,158.14 to THON to date, according to its website.

Penkala said the fundraiser gives people who may not have the means to plainly donate money an opportunity to contribute.

“If they were going to buy something anyway, they have that knowledge that it’s going to a good cause,” she said.

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Professor wins National Medal of Science

By Rachael Keller
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Richard Alley, a geosciences professor at Penn State, won the National Medal of Science on Jan. 3 during a White House ceremony.

The National Medal of Science is the highest recognition a scientist or engineer could receive. The award is given to those deserving of special recognition due to their outstanding contributions in their field of work, and for Alley, it was his group project focused on ice.

Alley said his love for science began with rocks back in elementary school in central Ohio, where he grew up.

“I was interested in rocks. I was interested in the outdoors. (My) family succeeded in getting us to Yellowstone; that was so cool,” Alley said. “I (also) got to do some rock collecting and caving in high school.”

Alley went to college at Ohio State University, majoring in geology and mineralogy. In need of a summer job in 1977, Alley began working with a glaciologist the summer after his freshman year.

He began his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in geology and geophysics, with a graduate level minor in material science and metallurgical engineering.

After graduating, Alley said he came to Penn State under former President Eric Barron.

At the time, Barron and John Dutton, dean of the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, were working to establish what is now the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute.

“He was assembling this amazing, amazing crew of people,” Alley said. “The opportunity to be a little part of that was too good to pass up.”

Byron Parizek, a professor of geosciences and mathematics at Penn State DuBois, met Alley at Penn State when he was a student.

“(Alley’s) energy, enthusi-

asm and the way he taught was so inspiring,” Parizek said. “Where we stood, what we knew, and what still needed to be discovered was so tangible.”

Parizek calls his current research “process-oriented numerical modeling.” He focuses on understanding the underlying physics for changes being seen and including that into models to predict the future.

Now, he and Alley are colleagues and work together as part of the Penn State Ice and Climate Research Exploration group (PSICE).

“He’s got a heart of gold. He’s got a moral compass that is very true, and he is brilliant,” Parizek said.

Alley said he was one of the few researchers focused on ice when he began working at Penn State with the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute team.

He said his research has always been with glaciers and ice sheets — specifically large ice sheets in places like Greenland and Antarctica, though he also works with mountain glaciers.

By studying ice sheets, Alley said he could date ice cores, similar to tree rings, fact check himself on his own discoveries, find an accumulation history and see things like pollen, dust, sea salt, cosmic rays, micro meteorites and air bubbles.

One of the main things Alley researches is the history of climate, which is “written” in the ice sheets.

“We’re warming the climate. This is melting ice. This is raising sea level,” Alley said. “A lot of what we do now is pointed at understanding the possibility for the ice to raise sea level and how much, how fast.”

Alley compared most things in the world to dials. He said if you push a dial a little, it will move a little, and if you push it a little more, it will move a little more and so on.

Nonetheless, there are things in nature that are switches. According to Alley, if you push a switch a little, nothing happens, but when you push a little more and flip it, it switches.



Courtesy of Richard Alley

Penn State Professor of Geosciences Richard Alley won the National Medal of Science on Jan. 3, 2025. Alley is part of the Earth and Environmental Systems Institution Team, studying glaciers and ice sheets.